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Approved For Release 2008/04/21 : CIA-RDP83-00714R000100160008-2

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

ER 79-1151/2A

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25 September 1979

Dear Zbig,

In response to your 6 September request for information on Soviet Kurdish-language broadcasts and publications, we have prepared the attached report. We share your interest in the Soviets' policy towards the Kurds and have taken action to improve our capability to monitor their Kurdish-language propaganda. We will keep you informed of future developments. ☐

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Yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Stansfield Turner".

STANSFIELD TURNER

Attachment:

"Soviet Broadcasts on Kurdish Issue" (PA M 79-10438)

The Honorable Zbigniew Brzezinski  
Assistant to the President for  
National Security Affairs  
The White House

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THE DIRECTOR OF  
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

NEAC #

4813-7911

Deputy Director for National Foreign Assessment 20 SEP 1979

NOTE FOR THE DIRECTOR

Stan:

In a 6 September memorandum, Brzezinski praised our memorandum "The Kurdish Problem in Perspective" (published in August) and requested more information on Soviet Kurdish-language broadcasts and publications. We have prepared the attached report, describing the hiring of a Kurdish translator by FBIS and outlining a program for him. The report also provides an analysis of Soviet propaganda on the Kurds as expressed in their clandestine radio station "National Voice of Iran"--as we believe the Kurdish-language propaganda will prove similar in content.

Bruce C. Clarke, Jr.

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Attachment:

Letter to Brzezinski with report entitled  
"Soviet Broadcasts on Kurdish Issue"  
(PA M 79-10438)

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18 September 1979

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Soviet Broadcasts on Kurdish Issue

REFERENCE: Brzezinski Memo of 6 September to DCI  
on Kurdish Question

1. In response to the interest expressed by Dr. Brzezinski last spring in improved collection on the Kurdish question, the intelligence community undertook steps to begin coverage of Soviet propaganda in Kurdish. FBIS now has a Kurdish capability in London and has begun coverage of Yerevan radio broadcasts in Kurdish. It will also be adding a Kurdish translator in Amman in the next 2-3 weeks. FBIS has entered a subscription for RYA TAZA, which is published in Yerevan and which is the only known Kurdish language journal published in the USSR. [ ]

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2. FBIS is now covering Yerevan radio broadcasts in Arabic and Armenian and will compare them with the Yerevan Kurdish broadcasts to determine whether the Soviets are tailoring their output to the Kurds. The results of this comparison should be available by early October. [ ]

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*This memorandum was prepared by the USSR-East European Division of the Office of Political Analysis. Comments may be addressed to [ ]*

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PA M 79-10438

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3. In the absence of coverage of Soviet broadcasts in Kurdish, we have been closely watching the Soviet-backed, clandestine radio station "National Voice of Iran" (NVOI). This station broadcasts in Persian into Iran from Baku and has commented frequently on the Kurdish issue. Its coverage has been more extensive and detailed than that of the official Soviet media, but the general message has been similar. ☐

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4. NVOI has supported Kurdish demands for local autonomy within a unified Iran, while rejecting the concept of separatism as a counterrevolutionary device designed to foment incidents between the Kurds and the central government. It has also consistently urged both the Kurds and the government to reach a peaceful solution, arguing that only the enemies of the revolution stand to gain from armed confrontation. ☐

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5. However, as the confrontation between the Kurds and the central Iranian government has intensified, NVOI has become increasingly critical of the latter. From a position of praise for the regime's announced intention to grant autonomy to the Kurds, the station moved first to express disappointment with its lack of progress in granting autonomy to the Kurds and then to criticism of its use of armed force. ☐

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6. While increasingly critical of the regime's response to the Kurdish issue, NVOI has continued to urge the Kurds to avoid actions which could widen division among the forces of the revolution. It has at no time, even implicitly, encouraged armed resistance to the central authorities. (See Annex for additional details on these broadcasts). ☐

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7. We believe that, when we are able to analyze Soviet Kurdish-language broadcasts and publications, we will find that they have, in general, adhered to the line taken in the Soviet central press and have been similar in content to the commentary of NVOI. The Soviets have typically maintained broad consistency in their propaganda organs. It is, however, likely that Kurdish-language propaganda is more sympathetic to Kurdish concerns and more critical of Iranian government actions than other outlets. ☐

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8. Propaganda is, of course, only one tool of policy, and it is certainly possible that the Soviets are saying one thing publicly and another privately. It is also possible that they are pursuing a course of action (such as clandestinely supplying arms to the Kurds) which tends to undermine their own counsels of restraint. A recent unconfirmed

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ANNEX NVOI Broadcasts on Kurdish Issues

As differences between the Kurds and the central government developed in February and March 1979, NVOI accused enemies of the revolution of trying to provoke bloodshed between "our Kurdish brethren" and the Iranian revolution. NVOI supported the government's plans and, stating that such large issues could not be resolved quickly, urged the Kurds to be patient and avoid aggravating relations with the government. ☐

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By June, frustration with the regime's lack of action was fairly clearly expressed. While stating that the revolution had given a ray of hope to ethnic minorities, NVOI urged that the government quickly resolve the issue because the enemies of the revolution were increasingly trying to muddy the water and create incidents. By July, this impatience had taken on a tone of warning although it was coupled with continued advice to the Kurds to exercise restraint. NVOI stated that "our Kurdish brothers now justly expect the rulers of the Islamic Republic not to delay any further the recognition of their national rights." The station asserted that no appropriate measures had yet been taken by the government and that this failure was aggravating disturbances in minority areas. NVOI went on, however, to warn the Kurds not to be taken in by those wanting to use them as a base for counterrevolution. ☐

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In a 23 July broadcast, NVOI expanded on its position that the Kurds must be patient. It argued that without a rule of law and a national government, securing the rightful demands of the national minorities would not be possible. It again emphasized that enemies of the revolution were involved in recent events in Kordestan (presumably the armed clashes) and urged vigilance to avoid provocations and impetuous acts that might nullify recent achievements. ☐

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By late August and early September, NVOI's impatience with government inaction with respect to advancing Kurdish autonomy had evolved into criticism of the use of government force. In a 21 August broadcast, NVOI stated that attacks on leftist, progressive, and national forces had intensified

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in connection with events in Kordestan. It charged that government lack of success in dealing with the issue and the opportunism of some groups should not be allowed to negate the issue of rights or be used to attack forces loyal to the revolution. On 30 August, NVOI charged the government with failing to live up to its promises and stated that the government should have done that rather than send the army into Kordestan. It argued that the government's actions were playing into the hands of the counterrevolutionaries.

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SUBJECT: Soviet Broadcasts on Kurdish Issue

NFAC/OPA/USSR-EE/E/[ ] (18Sep79)

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